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PEEL: ITS MEANING
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GEORGE NEILSON ❁ ❁



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PEEL:

ITS MEANING AND DERIVATION: AN
ENQUIRY INTO THE EARLY HISTORY
OF THE TERM NOW APPLIED TO MANY
BORDER TOWERS

BY

GEORGE NEILSON

F.S.A. SCOT.

AUTHOR OF 'TRIAL BY COMBAT,' 'PER LINEAM VALLI,' ETC.

EDINBURGH

GEORGE P. JOHNSTON, 33 GEORGE STREET

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PREFACE.

THE number of enquiries, resulting from the issue of 55 copies privately reprinted from the Proceedings of the Glasgow Archæological Society, has tempted me to print, for sale, a fresh edition, limited to 120 copies. The text is unchanged, but one or two very slight additions are made to the notes.

G. N.

34 GRANBY TERRACE,
GLASGOW, *September, 1893.*

632327

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PEEL: ITS MEANING AND DERIVATION.

BY

GEORGE NEILSON, F.S.A.Scot.

[Originally read at a Meeting of the Glasgow Archaeological Society held on
9th January, 1891; but since re-written.]

THIS paper¹ is an attempt to trace the historical evolution of the word 'peel'—a name now practically appropriated to the small, strong rectangular towers of stone² which, sometimes moated, sometimes surrounded by a 'barmkin' or exterior wall, stud the English and Scottish border with memorials of ancient international feuds. It is emphatically a word with a history, to which neither lexicographer nor antiquary has yet done justice.

I. NOTE OF EXPLANATION OF SOME CONTRACTED REFERENCES.

Bain=Calendars of Documents relating to Scotland. Ed. Joseph Bain. (Record publication.)

Bower=Bower's Scotichronicon. Ed. Goodal.

Exch. Rolls=Exchequer Rolls of Scotland. (Record publication.)

Hamilton Papers=(Record publication. Ed. Joseph Bain.)

L.Q.=Liber Quotidianus Contrarotulatoris Garderobæ, 1299-1300.

R.S.=Rolls series.

Rot. Scot.=Rotuli Scotiæ. (Record publication.)

Stevenson=Historical Documents Scotland, 1286-1306. Ed. Joseph Stevenson. (Record publication.)

2. Excellent general descriptions of these towers are given by Mr. C. C. Hodges in the *Reliquary*, v. pp. 1-10, and by Chancellor R. S. Ferguson, in his *History of Cumberland*, 236. See also an interesting sketch of the border tower system in Canon (now Bishop) Mandell Creighton's *Carlisle*, pp. 82-84. I differ from them all, however (but see note p. 33 *infra*), as to the meaning and history of *peel*.

As is not unusual in matters philological it is necessary at the outset to discard some preconceptions,¹ to get rid of the idea that peel meant from the first what it means now, and to be prepared to find that in the course of some six centuries the signification has altered. Was our peel always a tower of stone, as all previous writers on the subject have assumed? If not, what was it? Whence comes it—from Latin *Phala*, an oval tower;² from Latin *pila*, a pile;³ from Celtic *peel* or *pill*, an earthen mound or castle;⁴ or from any of them? Before offering an answer I submit my evidence.

I.—PEELS OF EDWARD I.

The oldest proper examples of the word known to me occur in the accounts of the costs of the Scottish wars of Edward I. The first peel on record is that of Lochmaben: the next is at Dumfries. Others soon follow at Linlithgow and Selkirk.

I. *Lochmaben*:

Edward retiring from Scotland after the battle of Falkirk in 1298, had taken possession of the castle of the Bruces at Lochmaben, referred to as a *castrum*⁵ and as a *chastel*.⁶ That winter a considerable addition was made to its defensive strength, as appears from payments⁷ made to English labourers, sawyers and carpenters (*ad faciendum pelum ibidem*) for making a peel there. The entry as regards the sawyers is (*ad sarranda ligna pro constructione peli*) for sawing wood for the making of the peel. This leaves little doubt that the peel was essentially a wooden structure. Its character is further illustrated by an order⁸ issued in November, 1299, to provide for the

¹ I begin with some of my own contained in *Annandale under the Bruces*, pp. 28-9.

² Jamieson's *Dictionary*.

³ Professor Skeat in his *Supplement to his Dictionary*. But see note p. 33 *infra*.

⁴ I think I have heard this derivation eloquently maintained by Professor John Veitch.

⁵ Trivet (*English Hist. Soc.*) 374. Probably this castle then stood on the old site now known as the Castlehill. The argument that chiefly persuades me into that belief is touched upon in my last note on Selkirk peel *infra*.

⁶ Stevenson, ii. 333.

⁷ Stevenson, ii. 361.

⁸ Stevenson, ii. 404, 405. Bain, ii. 1112.

sure keeping of the close outside the castle, strengthened by a palisade—*custodia clausi extra castrum de Loghmaban palitio firmati*. This passage points with great clearness to the conclusion that the peel was this palisaded or stockaded close, forming an outer rampart extending the bounds and increasing the accommodation of the castle. In 1300 houses¹ had been made in the 'piel,' and in 1301 the 'pele' was unsuccessfully assailed² by the Scots. In the writs relative to Lochmaben Castle in subsequent years, very many of them conjoin the peel with the castle,³ the full name and style of which was *castrum et pelum*. In 1376 payments⁴ were made for planks and to carpenters at the new front called 'la Pele,' and the entry distinctly contrasts with that which follows for 'stanworke' of the castle itself. So late as 1397 English writs refer to the castle and peel.⁵ The nature of the peel of Lochmaben is thus tolerably definite.

2. Dumfries:

Still more so is the evidence from Dumfries. A castle was there,⁶ just as at Lochmaben, before the peel was made by King Edward in the autumn of 1300. In September Friar Robert of Ulm and with him Adam of Glasham and many other carpenters were busy in the forest of Inglewood in Cumberland making the peel, as the account⁷ phrases it, which was to be set up round about the castle of Dumfries. King Edward visited them one day. The queen visited them another.⁸ The exigencies of war demanded haste, and the work was pushed on with all possible energy. Soon we hear that the king has gone to Dumfries, perhaps escorting the workmen and the materials,

¹ Stevenson, ii. 408. *Les maisons quil ad fait en le piel de Loghmaban*.

² Stevenson, ii. 432.

³ In 1300 *L.Q.* 120; in 1304 Bain, ii. 1525; in 1334-36-37-38-41-56-60; *Rot. Scot.*, i. 263, 264, 276, 280, 281, 399, 479, 550, 607, 793, 846.

⁴ Bain, iv. 231.

⁵ Bain, iv. 494.

⁶ Stevenson, ii. 333, 413; *Exch. Rolls*, i. 37; *Rot. Scot.*, i. 7, 12.

⁷ *L.Q.* 165, *Carpentariis facientibus pelum in foresta de Inglewoode assidendum circa astrum de Dumfries*.

⁸ *L.Q.* 167. This entry repeats the phrase of the last one precisely.

(*pour lever son pel e efforcer le chastel*) to raise his peel and strengthen the castle.¹ Cordage and other necessities were purchased to bind up the timber² for conveyance to the peel, and other arrangements were made for the same purpose.³ Precise details are lacking as to the mode of conveyance, but whilst some of the material was transported by sea up the river Nith,⁴ it is probable that the bulk of it was conveyed by the workmen themselves under convoy of the expeditionary force, a part of which the king had reviewed⁵ at Carlisle on 15th October. On the 18th he appears to have reached Annan,⁶ doubtless, with a detachment of his army on the march. Possibly the work of erecting the peel at Dumfries began before his arrival there, for the accounts⁷ leave it uncertain how much of the work of the carpenters and others at the peel was done at Inglewood Forest, and how much on the spot. By the 20th of October, at latest, the task was being pushed briskly forward by all hands at Dumfries. Ditchers, carpenters and smiths toiled hard at the digging of ditches and planting and rearing of beams and palisades. The wages account shews that from first to last the carpenters (on an average to the number of over 60, but sometimes over 100 being employed) laboured for 11 weeks. The ditchers, numbering about 250, worked for a fortnight only. There were about two dozen smiths. It is obvious, therefore, how greatly the carpenter-work predominated. The term employed⁸ in the entries describing these labours is usually very general—for work (*circa pelum*) about the 'peel.' We are not told very precisely what was done by the

¹ Stevenson, ii. 296. There can be no doubt that Father Stevenson is in error in assigning this letter to August, 1298. There was no peel being raised at Dumfries then. All the circumstances point clearly to the letter having been written in October, 1300. See the letter, note its contents, and compare—Bain, iii. 1154, 1164, 1165, 1171, 1172, 1174, 1175; iv. p. 446; *L.Q.* 13, 73, 265. The matter cannot be discussed at greater length here.

² *L.Q.* 74.

³ Bain, iv. 1783; *L.Q.* 265.

⁴ *L.Q.* 268.

⁵ *L.Q.* 260.

⁶ *L.Q.* 43.

⁷ *L.Q.* 264-5.

⁸ *Operancium circa pelum de Dumfries*, *L.Q.* 6, 7, 264, 268; *Pro factura et operatione peli* *L.Q.* 263; *Pro factura peli*, *L.Q.* 265, 268; *Pro pelo faciendo*, *L.Q.* 268.

ditchers (*fossatores*) but one entry¹ makes express what otherwise would have gone without saying, that it was a fosse (*fossatum*) they were making. That entry shews that women were employed to clear out the ditch which the men had dug. By the 30th of October all was virtually complete. There still remained some wood-work to do, but broadly speaking the peel was finished. From these particulars it is easy to infer the character of King Edward's peel. A very odd entry² shews that an axe was borrowed to cut trees near Dumfries, 'for pales there.' The pales cut with that axe (which by the way was not returned to its owner) doubtless went, with hundreds of others, to the making of the peel. The castle appears to have had thrown round it, some little distance out from the walls, a strong palisade or stockade, beyond which again a large fosse was dug. This palisaded and moated *enceinte* constituted the peel.

Within its buildings might be erected, such as barracks, or store rooms, or stables. The existence of houses in the peel at Lochmaben has been noticed. At Dumfries the same must have been the case, for there are three consecutive entries³ in the wages accounts—(1) for the cavalry in the castle (*infra municionem castri*); (2) for the cavalry in the peel, (*infra municionem peli de Dumfries post constructionem ejusdem peli*); and (3) for the engineers and others in the castle (*infra municionem ejusdem castri*), shewing by the clearest contrast, that the peel had a garrison of its own after 2nd November, 1300.

3. *Linlithgow* :

In 1301 King Edward spent the winter at Linlithgow, and instituted a series of extensive changes on the castle there. Here again he had a fortress already existing,⁴ and in spite of Lord Hailes⁵ to the contrary, I am satisfied from the records, that it is quite a mistake to say that he built a castle. Before proceeding to show from the contemporary authorities what he actually

¹ *L.Q.* 269.

² Bain, iv. 1783.

³ *L.Q.* 142-43.

⁴ *Chastel de Linlithqu* in 1296. See Stevenson, ii. 98.

⁵ Hailes' *Annals*, anno 1301.

did, I shall briefly examine the statements of Fordun and Wyntoun, from which erroneous inferences have been drawn.

Fordun¹ says that in 1301 the *municipium* or peel of Linlithgow (*municipium scilicet Pel de Lithou*) was constructed by the King of England.² The same statement is made with a curious variation by Wyntoun³ who says that—

‘ Wyth the Lang schankis this Edwardt,
Kyng off Ingland, coyme efftyrwardt,
And Lynlythkow fayre and welle,
Gert byg and mak thare the Pelle.’

This passage plainly means that the King built Linlithgow itself, and made the peel. It seems to be not altogether improbable that Wyntoun mistook the meaning of *municipium*, interpreting it in its classical sense as a town, and unaware of the mediæval signification with which Fordun employed it. *Municipium* in Low Latin⁴ is used to denote an outer fortification, the adjunct to a castle or town—in short is a synonym for a peel, as defined by the facts at Lochmaben, Dumfries, and, as will be seen, Linlithgow also.

The account⁵ for the making of the peel in November, 1301 (although the word peel is never used in it), is very explicit. It shows that it furnished employment to 80 ditchers for 8 days, and to 107 carpenters for the same period. Evidently, therefore, the work resembled in all respects that at Lochmaben and Dumfries. In the spring of 1302 considerable extensions were contracted for.⁶ In the summer there was demand⁷ for 30 more of the best carpenters, and the sending of 19 in July is on record.⁸ In September the work was so far advanced that there was nothing further⁹ to do ‘except 14

¹ Fordun, Skene's ed. i. 332.

² A variant is given in a footnote—*municipium de Lynlicqu quod Anglice Pele vocatur*. This is the reading in the corresponding passage in Bower, ii. 220.

³ Wyntoun, viii. (end of chap. 15).

⁴ See passage cited by Du Cange—*municipia et incurtes præter castrum subvertens*—from Suger's *Vie de Louis le Gros* (edition of 1887 p. 133). Compare Raoul Glaber (1886) p. 19—*municipia civitatum vel castrorum*. These cannot denote the castle itself.

⁵ Stevenson, ii. 441.

⁶ Bain, ii. 1321 § 15.

⁷ Bain, ii. 1308.

⁸ Bain, ii. 1398.

⁹ Bain, ii. 1324.

perches of peel and 6 bretasches'—these latter being¹ a species of wooden turrets usually accompanying peel-work. In 1303 we hear² of the 'Pele': in 1304 of³ the 'Pel': in 1305 of⁴ the keeper (*custos peli regis*) of the King's peel. Repairs executed in 1304, because a storm⁵ had broken down a bit of the peel and fosse (*parte peli et fossati*), prove the close association of the two. From this time forward there are frequent allusions⁶ to the peel, until 1311, when, as Barbour minutely describes, the place was won from the English, who had held it so long. He tells⁷ us that—

' At Lythkow wes than a pele,
Mekill, and stark, and stuffyt wele.'

and how the patriotic Scots essayed 'castellis and peyllis for to ta,' of which Linlithgow was one. The 'pele' and castle were captured by the stratagem of stopping a cart of hay in the gateway.

In the *Scottish Exchequer Rolls* mention is made of the meadow⁸ of the 'pele' (*prati de le Pele de Lithgow*); there are other references to the same effect,⁹ and it is remarkable that to this day¹⁰ the good people of Linlithgow apply the term 'the peel' not to the castle (as most writers apply it) but to the meadow ground outside the walls of the palace, and lying virtually all round it, forming a sort of headland jutting into the loch, and having the palace seated in the middle of it, near its southern boundary. There can be little doubt that local tradition has thus preserved the evidence of the position occupied by the extensive

¹ Du Cange, voce *bretachiu*, Voillet-le-Duc voce *bretesche*.

² Bain, ii. 1422.

³ Bain, ii. 1586.

⁴ Stevenson, ii. 494.

⁵ Bain iv, p. 459.

⁶ *Rot. Scot.*, i. 111. Bain, iii. 121, 254, 317, 682, pp. 411-12.

⁷ Barbour's *Bruce*, book vii. 435.

⁸ *Exch. Rolls*, v. 588.

⁹ *Reg. Magni Sigilli*, 1546-90, No. 1768. See letter in 1599, by James VI., where complaint is made of encroachments which caused the loch to 'overflow our peill and orchardis.' The inhabitants of the burgh used to bleach their clothes in the 'peel.' Waldie's *History of Linlithgow*, 1858, pp. 76-77.

¹⁰ My attention was drawn to this by Dr. Dickson of the Register House, whom it is a great pleasure to thank for his kindly interest in this paper.

stockaded or palisaded and moated close which Edward I. added to Linlithgow Castle.

4. *Selkirk*:

Whilst the work was still going on at Linlithgow, another peel was in hand at Selkirk. According to the *Scalacronica* it was Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, who made it.¹ 'At Selkirk, the said Eymur (*fist afermer un piele*) caused a 'piele' to be fortified.' The existence of a castle at Selkirk was of old standing, as it is mentioned in a charter of David I. It was a residence of the kings of Scotland certainly as late as the time² of Alexander III. Probably, however, it was of no great account as a fortress in 1302. The accounts³ for the making of this peel are very like those for the others. There were employed carpenters, masons, hewers, smiths, barrowmen⁴ (*baiardi*), wood-cutters felling trees in the forest, ditchers, carriers, and women carrying hods (*hottas*) of lime and fuel. At Selkirk, however, a tower was built which would appear to have been of wood⁵ as the western doorway in it is specially referred to as having been 'faced with stone,' a phrase incompatible with a stone building. In September one memorandum⁶ states that there are 14 perches of 'pele' made, and another⁷ adds that there are 43 perches of 'pel' yet to make, whilst the stonework of the chief gate is raised above ground to the drawbridge.

Sir Alexander de Balliol was made keeper⁸ of the new fortress. Looking to the nature of it as defined in the accounts, we cannot wonder that it was

¹ *Scalacronica*, 127. I think it is very doubtful whether it was he that made it, but for present purposes that point is of no account.

² *Scots Acts*, (Thomson) i. (red ink pages) 91, 390-2, 405; *Melrose Cartulary*, 274; Craig Brown's *Selkirkshire*, i. 10.

³ Bain iv, 468-9.

⁴ *Baiardi*: compare *baiardores*, Bain iv, 1786. From baiard, a hand-barrow. See New English Dictionary *voc. baiardour, bayard*.

⁵ Bain ii, 1324 p. 339-40.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 340.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Bain, ii. p. 337.

called a peel. Indeed the instructions¹ for its erection were that it was to be 'a pele with a stone gateway.' 'This, and this alone, it was.'²

The peel was not long held. The 'roaring sweep of border fray' soon bore it out of the English grasp. Alexander de Balliol was pardoned³ by King Edward in 1305 'for the loss of the pele of Selkirk.' The last entry I have noticed⁴ about it in a military capacity is in 1311. The name, notwithstanding, was tenacious.

Lands called 'le Pele' are repeatedly on records in the Selkirk accounts for the fifteenth century. The Peilhill, Pielhill, or Pelehill⁵ also, certainly the site of the Peel and locally believed to have been the site of the old castle as well,⁷ is frequently mentioned in early writings, and is still well-known. The fosse dug in 1302 is referred to in 1535 as the Peel-seugh—and is visible to this day.⁸ Even the stockade or other wood-work, which distinctively constituted the peel, appears also to be alluded to in the mention⁹ in 1535 of the 'auld barros' in close connection with the Peel-seuch. Now, *barras* or *barrers* (with a wide variety of spellings) has two main meanings, one being the lists for knightly encounters,¹⁰ the other being the palisade in front

¹ Bain, ii. 1722. I think this writ clearly belongs to the summer of 1302. The date-fixing reference to the 'K's last Parliament at London' must mean that of June, 1302. See Stubbs' *Select Charters* (1884), p. 446.

² Mr. Craig Brown, in his *Selkirkshire*, appears to favour the view that it was a regular stone castle that was built. I see no evidence of this. If there was a castle, why is it virtually unheard of ever after?

³ Bain, ii. 1649.

⁴ Bain, iii. 218.

⁵ *Exch. Rolls*, v. 400, 440; viii. 104.

⁶ *Exch. Rolls*, viii. 4; *Retours, Selkirkshire*, 1, 5, 65, 91; *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, ii. year 1509, No. 3388.

⁷ Craig Brown's *Selkirkshire*, ii. 10.

⁸ Craig Brown's *Selkirkshire*, ii. pp. 10, 41.

⁹ Craig Brown's *Selkirkshire*, ii. p. 41.

¹⁰ I may cite the index of *Trial by Combat* for many references.

of a fortress.¹ I have little doubt that the latter sense² belonged to the 'auld barros' in the records at Selkirk in 1535.

5. *Berwick*;

These are all the clear cases known to me of peels made in Scotland by Edward I., but there is yet one other piece of evidence as to the nature of these fortifications which is of exceptional interest for more reasons than one. I have purposely kept it out of its chronological place because it might conceivably be argued that it is not a true peel. When the war of independence broke out and King Edward was besieging Berwick, he was assailed with derisive shouts by the inhabitants of the town, who jeered at him in rhyme.³

" Kyng Edward wanne thu havest Berwic pike the ;
Wanne thu havest gotten dike the."

The reason for the taunt is not explained by the historians, but it is not impossible that some encampment with digging of ditches and making of palisades on the north side of Berwick—between the town and the Scots, perhaps in rear of the English army—may have occasioned the taunt, which was cruelly avenged by the slaughter of 8,000 citizens after the rampart had been stormed. Be the explanation what it may, Edward literally accepted the jeering counsel given to him, and proceeded to secure Berwick by greatly strengthening its fortifications. He made a great ditch 80 feet in breadth and 40 feet deep.⁴ One version⁵ of a rhyme made by the victorious Englishmen reads thus :

" Picket him and diket him, in skorn seiden he,⁶
Nu piketh he7 it and diketh it his owen for to be."

¹ *New Eng. Dictionary*, voce Barrace.

² The same consideration has led me to alter the opinion I once held about the site of Lochmaben Castle. The fact, that the Barras at Lochmaben is near the old site of the castle and in the town, convinces me that when the peel was made, the castle was on its old site, now known as the Castlehill, not its present one. This matter is, however, too large to handle here.

³ Rishanger (*R.S.*) 373. Even more objectionable insults were levelled at him from the walls. See *Lanercost Chron.* 173.

⁴ Hemingburgh ii. 99.

⁵ Quoted in Wright's *Political Songs* (Camden Society) p. 392 ; to be compared with p. 286, also with Langtoft (*R.S.*) ii. 234.

⁶ *i.e.* The jeering Scot.

⁷ *i.e.* King Edward.

The meaning of this I suppose to be that, taking the sneering Scot at his word, King Edward 'diket him' by making the great fosse, and 'piket him' by erecting a serried line of palisades—not unfitly to be called pikes—along the bank. This is not *a priori* reasoning, it is history; for Rishanger¹ tells us circumstantially that the King, not forgetful of the banter and taunting of the Scots, ordered the fosse² to be dug, and 'great and long pales' to be planted on the summit of the bank, which was heightened by the dug-out earth. Indeed, so eager was the great Plantagenet over the work that, with his own royal hand, he laboured³ with hod or barrow in the trench.

The nature of this fortification fully explains why in a document⁴ of the year 1300, special provision is made 'for the defence of the town and pele.'

The sum and substance of the evidence afforded by the operations of Edward I. in Scotland is decisive that the peel, as made by him, was radically a moated palisade, usually forming the *enceinte* of an existing castle which needed either to have its strength increased or its accommodation extended.

II.—ENGLISH-MADE PEELS FROM 1307 TO 1336.

6. Perth:

Passing with mere mention the peel of Livingstone⁵ (concerning the original nature of which nothing substantial is known except that it was garrisoned by the troops of Edward), the fortifications of Perth fall next to be considered. In 1307 orders⁶ had been issued for the fortification of Perth, with which the

¹ Rishanger (*R.S.*) 375.

² Langtoft (*R.S.*) ii, 234, says much the same;

*"Le fet environer de fosse large et lee,
En reprovante le Escot ke ad de ly chaunte."*

³ *Et ut diccbatur, ipsemet cum vehiculo terram portabat ut foveam accumularet.* Rishanger, *ut supra*. Another royal ditcher was St. Louis at Jaffa in 1252-53. See Joinville, ed. Wailly, 1888, § 517,

⁴ Bain, ii. 1171. I have met with no other allusion to the Berwick peel.

⁵ Bain, iii. p. 411. In 1311 there was a garrison in *municione peli de Leivingstone*. In late times it had a tower defended by an earthen rampart and a wide fosse. In 1594 this house is referred to as the Place of the Peill of Levingstoun. *Reg. Privy Council of Scotland*, v. 193.

⁶ Bain, ii. 1912.

burghesses appear to have complied ; for, some two years later, they complained¹ that no allowance had been granted them for the costs they had incurred in making (*entour cele puelle e le fosse*) a 'puelle' and fosse. More than twenty years afterwards these fortifications come very curiously to light in the records of the usurpation of Edward Balliol. In 1332, having, by the aid of his English and disaffected Scottish allies, defeated the Scottish army at the battle of Dupplin, he took possession of Perth. Its fortifications were old and decayed, but as he anticipated an early attack from the Earl of Fife, he immediately repaired them. The *Scalacronica*² says the repairs consisted of dressing up anew the old fosses and restoring their guard of bretasches. Another chronicle³ says to the same effect that he strengthened the ruined fortifications (*cum palis et tabulis*) with pales and planks ; whilst Knighton says that he fortified⁴ the town (*cum larga fossura et de palo*) with a large fosse and a palisade. There was urgent need for these precautions, for the Earl was hovering in the rear. A stratagem of his⁵ recalls the incident in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, where, according to the astonished messenger, the wood began to move, forcing Macbeth to believe that the weird sisters' saying was fulfilled, and Birnam Wood was come to Dunsinane.

"The Earl Patrick, with his army, hastened to the wood of Lambirkin, where "he commanded them to make up loads and bundles of tree boughs and "branches to fill up the ante-mural fosses of Perth, and to advance with them "towards the town. But the men in the town, seeing as it were a thorn-wood⁶ "marching towards them, were greatly afraid. However, putting themselves in

¹ Bain, iii. 68 ; *Nat. MSS. Scot.*, part ii. No. 15.

² *Scalacron*, p. 160, *enfermerent la vile en referaillaunt les vultz fosses qe chescun reperrailla sa gard de bretage.*

³ *Chronicles of Edward I. and II. (R.S.)*, ii. 107. The *Lanercost Chron.*, 269, says Perth was unvalled—'non murata.'

⁴ Knighton (*R.S.*), 1464.

⁵ Bower, ii. 36.

⁶ *Pruinosus nemus*. This is translated by Wyntoun as 'hare wod,' which literally renders *pruinus* = hoar or frosty. I do not understand this, and have, much doubting, preferred to suppose that the word was *prunosus*.

"a posture of defence to safeguard the town, they waited in astonishment the "attack (*adventum exercitus nemorosi*) of the woody army."¹

The woody army, however, unlike that of Malcolm when Macbeth 'tried the last' at Dunsinane, failed in its purpose to storm the 'pierre' of Perth, which, with its fosse and wooden wall,² appears to have resembled in all particulars those of its predecessors in other places.

7. Liddell:

The brightest of recent county historians devotes a single, brief, and quite inadequate sentence³ to one of the finest historic remains in Cumberland. 'Liddell Moat,' he says, 'was probably the original *caput baronie* [of Liddell], and its vast earthworks are remarkable for size and preservation.'

The Moat stands nobly picturesque on the Liddell, near its junction with the Esk. It is a series of very deep and broad trenches, isolating and strongly fortifying a great mound—called by Dr. Skene⁴ a 'magnificent hill-fort'—of which the northern side was already still more strongly guarded by the high and steep—indeed precipitous—river-bank. It is on English soil—soil which never was 'debatable.' It is, in spite of the silence of the county history, unquestionably the spot on which stood the castle of Lidel, which was taken⁵ in 1174 by King William the Lion. In 1282 when an 'extent' was made of the manor of 'Lydel in Cumberland,' it was recorded by the jury⁶ that 'there is at Lydel the site of a castle' with some buildings on it in bad repair. In 1300 an indenture⁷ was entered into for 'repairing the mote and the fosses around; strengthening and re-dressing the same and the pele and the

¹ Wyntoun, viii. ch. 26, tells the same story, incidentally referring to the making of 'brettys' or bretasches by the town's defenders.

² Described by R. de Avesbury as made, '*cum fossis et antris recipientibus aquam currentem in circuitu et muris ligneis.*' *Murimuth, etc.* (R.S.) 298.

³ R. S. Ferguson's *Cumberland*, 171.

⁴ *Celtic Scotland*, i. 157.

⁵ Benedictus Abbas (R.S.), i. 65; Bain, i. 685.

⁶ Bain, ii. 208. The site of the castle is again referred to in 1349; Bain, iii. 1542.

⁷ Bain, ii. 1173.

palisades, and making lodges within the mote, if necessary, for the safety of the men at arms of the garrison.' Hence it is easy to understand, why it is referred to about 1310 as ¹the 'Piel of Ledel,' and in 1319 as ²the 'Pele of Lidell.' Various chroniclers give it the same name in their narratives of the event of 1346—the chief fact in its history. On his expedition into England in that year—an enterprise which resulted in his utter defeat at Durham, where he was taken prisoner—David II., the ill-starred son of Robert the Bruce, after crossing the border besieged the place, which was held by Walter of Selby. One chronicle ³ calls it 'the fortalice (*fortalitium*) of Lidelle,' another, ⁴ 'the Pyle of Lydelle,' another, ⁵ 'the pile of Lidel.' Wyntoun ⁶ calls it 'Peel off Lyddale' and 'Pelle.' In the pages of Bower it bears the interesting name ⁷ '*municipium de Lidallis*.' Most important of all, however, and conclusive as to the geographical identity of this peel with the old castle of the Stutevilles and the Wakes, is the testimony of Galfridus le Baker, ⁸ who calls it 'a manor place (*quoddam manerium domine de Wake vocatum Ludedew*) ⁹ of the lady of Wake.'

The defence was conducted with such gallantry that it was not until the fourth day, in the morning before daybreak, that an assault could be undertaken. The great ditch was filled up with wood and earth and fascines; the Scots, covered by their shields, advanced to the attack: with iron tools they tore down the foundations of its walls or ramparts; and at last they took by storm the stubborn peel. Walter of Selby, its captive captain, vainly appealing to the king's justice and mercy, was beheaded, with an aggravated vindictiveness

¹ Bain, iii. 219.

² Bain, iii. 675.

³ Lanercost Chron. 345. The *fortalitium* is exactly preserved in one of its modern names of Liddell *Strength*.

⁴ Parkington, ap Leland T. i. p. 470, cited in Hailes' *Annals* anno 1346.

⁵ Scalacronica (Leland's translation) 301.

⁶ Wyntoun, viii. 6140-45.

⁷ Bower, ii. 340. Compare observations on *municipium*, *supra*, p. 6.

⁸ Galf. le Baker, ed. Giles, p. 170, see also Bain, i. 1557.

⁹ Ludedew is obviously the blunder of a copyist. A double l in some old MSS. is easily mistaken for a w.

unworthy of chivalry.¹ No one who has stood on the Strength of Liddell and in its mighty fosses will wonder at the gallant tenacity of its defence.

In the case of this peel there was no castle: there were great ditches: and the palisade constructed in 1300 may not improbably have been supplemented by works more durable. But to the last its characteristics assign it to the generic category of peel, a fort defended by a moated palisade.

Thus far the evidence with singular unanimity has gone to shew that a peel was essentially a structure of wood. In the example next to be considered we shall for the first time find a new element combining with wood in the construction.

8. *Kinross Fort.*

In 1335 the castle of Lochleven, held by the national party, was besieged by the Balliol faction, whose forces consisted of Englishmen and Anglified Scots. To blockade the island-castle the besiegers made a fort in St. Serf's Cemetery, near Kinross. This fort is never expressly named as a peel. Bower calls² it a 'fortalicium,' and Wyntoun,³ a 'fortalys.' That in character it was near akin to a peel is, however, apparent from the description given of its construction. Bellenden, translating Boece, says⁴ the besiegers 'maid thair bastailieis and trinscheis of fale and devat⁵ in the kirkyard of Sanct Sarfe beside Kinrosse.' The original passage in Boece's history as printed⁶ does not contain an equivalent of this description of a fortress of sod, although a few lines further on Boece mentions⁷ the making of a dam or *agger* with stones, trees, and sods (*lapides, arbores, cespites*), which dam Bellenden further describes⁸ as 'ane high dyke . . . biggit . . . with fale, devat, and trees.' There is other and better evidence that the Kinross fort was indeed

¹ In 1358 Selby's son was served heir to his father, who was, as the jury testified, 'slain by the Scots in the pele of Lydelle.' Bain, iii. 1670.

² Bower, ii. 313.

³ Wyntoun, viii. ch. 29.

⁴ Bellenden's Boece (1821), ii. 426.

⁵ Feal and Divot = turf, sods. See Jamieson's Dictionary.

⁶ Boece (1574), folio 317.

⁷ Ibid. 317 *verso*.

⁸ Bellenden's Boece, ii. 426.

so made, for Bower calls¹ it a fortalice of sod (*fortalicium de le fale*) and the Book of Pluscarden, still more explicit, says² its garrison made a strength in the churchyard, (*glebis terræque murantes firmaverunt et palis circumdederunt*) walling it with turf and surrounding it with pales. It would, therefore, seem that this fort wanted little except the name to make it a peel. Certain of its characteristics³ may be found illustrative hereafter.

9. *Stirling.*

In 1336 Edward III., in prosecution of his designs for the conquest of Scotland, made large additions⁴ to the fortifications of various castles. In particular between the autumn of that year and the following summer he executed extensive alterations on the castle of Stirling. The chronicle of Lanercost⁵ says, that in room of the castle which had been destroyed he made a fort (*præsidium quod Peel Anglice vocabatur*) which, in English, was called a peel. In the accounts⁶ rendered by the keeper of the castle the costs of the peel (*custus peli*) are fully set forth. The part selected for special strengthening was the inner bailey, a term which I understand to imply the inner ward or second line of defence of the castle. Possibly there was a ditch already there. Possibly the level of the inner bailey was so much higher than that of the outer or lower bailey as to make a ditch superfluous. At any rate the change now effected was to make a peel of this inner bailey

¹ Bower, ii. 313.

² Liber Pluscardensis, i. 272.

³ Extensive use was made of sods by the English in their operations in Scotland about this time. In 1335-36 repairs at Edinburgh Castle included earth and turf for daubing and roofing divers houses (*terram et turbas pro daubatura et pro coopertura diversarum domorum*), and for the making of walls of turf (*facientibus muros de turbis et fodientibus turbas*), and the digging of the turf.—See Bain, iii. p. 348. At Stirling in 1336-37 an account of wages *pro coopertura*, paid to the cutters of 'flaghturfs' (*fodiencium turbas vocatas flaghturfs*), shows that these turves—thin moory-surfaced sods are still called 'flags' or 'flax' in Southern Scotland, and the spade that cuts them is called 'flacterspade' (= of course to 'flaghturf-spade')—were for roofing purposes. Indeed one item is for the wages of men (*cooperiencium super dictas domos cum turbis*) 'covering over said houses with turf.'—Bain, iii. p. 365.

⁴ Hailes' Annals, *sub anno* 1336.

⁵ Lanercost Chron., 287.

⁶ Bain, iii. pp. 364 to 368.

(*pelam interioris ballii ex parte boriali castris*), in other words, to make the inner bailey a peel. The work appears to have been begun in November, 1336, and to have been finished about the end of the following March. The men engaged were 12 carpenters with 14 assistants for three weeks, 4 sawyers for one month, and 48 workmen for fifty-five days digging and 'daubing' a clayey mud or muddy clay. There are also mentioned 800 wicker hurdles for the work.¹

On a consideration of all the items in the account, it would seem that the peel of Stirling resembled the earlier peels in all respects save one. If there was no entry for digging a ditch, that was presumably because no ditch was necessary. The wood work is abundantly evident. But one great outstanding fact remains—unaccounted for by anything we have yet found in the accounts for the making of any other peel. What means the mud or clay?

It was carried in hods (*in hottis*); it was tempered in mortar, which itself, perhaps, was largely composed of clay;² it was used 'to daub the said peel' (*pro dicta pela daubanda*), or as it is alternatively expressed (*daubancium parietes pele*) for daubing the walls or sides of the peel.

We must have regard also to the distribution of time and labour—here in marked contrast to the proportions at Dumfries and Linlithgow. There the burden and heat of the day fell on the carpenters: here it fell not on the carpenters but on the 'daubers,' who were far more in number and far longer employed. These contrasting facts are of the utmost significance. Before

¹ Under the heading '*Custus pele castris et ingeniorum*' are the entries specially relative to the peel,—for the wages of '*xij carpentariorum* (for three weeks in November, 1336) *faciencium quandam pelam interioris ballii ex parte boriali castris*,' and for 14 men helping them '*in levacione ejusdem pele*,' also for 4 sawyers (for thirty days in January and February, 1337) sawing posts, joists, and planks '*tam pro portis castris quam bretagis pele*.' Also for '*dec clais . . . pro scaffaldis in dicta pela inde faciendis et super costibus exterioribus ejusdem attachiandis*.' Also for 48 diggers for fifty-five days after 4th February, '*fodiencium lutum pro dicta pela daubanda illud portancium in hottis, ac temperancium in mortario, et daubancium parietes pele predictae*.'—Bain, iii. pp. 366-7. I have Mr. Bain's authority for the corrected reading '*lutum*' in this last passage instead of '*littum*' as printed in the calendar. I have to thank Mr. Bain for his trouble in re-examining the roll at my request, as well as for other courtesies. As regards *hotta*, a hod, compare Fr. *hotte*.

² Wages were paid to men '*fodiencium argillum illud similiter et aquam portancium infra castrum, mortarium inde faciencium*.'—Bain, iii. p. 365.

the stress was upon the wood : here it was upon the clay. Nor must the 800 wicker hurdles be forgotten, an adequate accounting for which is obviously essential to the cohesion of any explanation. To me it appears that there is only one conclusion possible, and that the whole circumstances necessitate the induction that the peel of Stirling was of the type still known in Southern Scotland as a 'clay-daubing'—a structure¹ in which a series of strongly jointed posts and beams formed the framework of a thick mud wall or wall of clay, to which the wattled wicker added cohesive strength.

This conclusion is rendered a certainty by the fact that in this very year 1336, Edward III. strengthened the fortifications of Perth with (*luteo muro spisso*) a thick mud wall,² which Wyntoun³ calls 'the mwde wall dykis.'

Obviously the peel-work had developed during the course of the 14th century. A clay-daubed wall, with ribs and beams of timber at its heart,⁴ was an advance upon the primal palisade. A clay-daubing (such as the 'auld clay biggin' in which Robert Burns first saw the light) is as impervious to fire as a stone building. This from a military standpoint was an advantage of the first moment.

III.—OTHER EARLY PEELS.

If Blind Harry⁵ might be trusted there would be ground for believing that in Wallace's time there was a peel at Gargunnock.⁶

On Gargownno was byggyt a small peill
That warnyst was with men and wittail weile,
Within a dyk baith closs, chawmer, and hall.

¹ See Jamieson's *Dictionary*, *voce* 'Cat and Clay' for a description of rural work of this kind. I have had it described to me by persons who had seen and taken part in it. The 'cat' was the wisp of straw, or the like, used in working the clay into a sufficiently dry and cohesive state. These buildings were capable of being very quickly erected and by unskilled labour. There was often a merrymaking to signalise such an occasion. My grandfather, who died twenty years ago aged ninety, has told me of his being present at such gatherings in Dumfriesshire. 'Wattle and daub' is another name for the same kind of work.

² *Lanercost Chron.* 286.

³ Wyntoun, viii. 5558. See also Bower, ii. 307.

⁴ Churches were made of this kind of material. See Du Cange, *voce luteus*.

⁵ Wallace, iv. 213.

⁶ The wood for the peel of Stirling in 1336 was from this place.

The passage is at least decisive that the minstrel's conception of a peel did not greatly differ from that set forth in this paper. It was not a castle: it was a fortified close surrounded by a ditch—for of course Harry's 'dyk' has that meaning.¹

We are on surer historic ground as to the making of a peel by Robert the Bruce. In 1326 he paid for² the construction of a new peel (*unius pele nove*) at West Tarbert, in the vicinity of his castle there. The mason who built the latter made the former also—a fact of some suggestiveness. Not a few peels come fitfully under notice in the 14th century, concerning which there is little information extant, so that only their spellings call for mention here. I cite those which I have observed, premising that I have no doubt scores of others could be found. The 'pile' of Horton³ is named in 1316, the 'piles' of Boltone and Wytingam⁴ in 1318, and the 'peel' of Heyheved⁵ in 1322, these being all English. In Scotland we hear⁶ in 1333 of a fortalice (*fortalicium quod tunc Anglice vocabatur Pele*) then called in English a 'pele.' In connection with this latter a highly interesting contrast is drawn. Wyntoun speaks⁷ of 'fourre castellis and a pelle,' equivalent to Bower's⁸ corresponding *quatuor castris cum uno fortalitio*—a sharp distinction indicating that the difference between peel and castle was not a mere question of size.

I have found few other notices of 14th century historical peels, except in general charter references⁹ to *castrum et pelum* or *castrum pelum et fortalitium*

¹ The ditch appears from 'Piers Ploughman,' passus xix. line 13684-7, to have been an essential. The people are commanded

' For to delven a dych
Depe aboute Unitee
That holy chirche stode in Unitee
As it a pyl weere.'

² *Exch. Rolls*, i. 53.

³ Scalacron., 301. Trokelow (R.S.) 101, calls it *pelum*.

⁴ Bain, iii. 632.

⁵ *Lanercost Chron.* 250.

⁶ Bower, ii. 311. Wyntoun, viii. end of chap. 27.

⁷ Wyntoun, viii. 4007.

⁸ Bower, ii. 311.

⁹ See references *supra* to Lochmaben; also Du Cange, *voce Pila*. Rymer in 1336, 26th January.

—references which, if they prove nothing, illustrate the distinction between castle and peel.

During the wars of Balliol and Edward III. there are, however, some rather confusing references. Thus Bower mentions¹ the tower (*turris*) of Kenmore, which Boece calls² a castle (*castellum*) and Wyntoun³ a 'pele.' Similarly Fordun⁴ names the castle (*castrum*) of Leuchars, which Wyntoun again designates⁵ as a 'pele.' Such references to a time of rapid building and as rapid demolition of castles and fortresses are capable of another explanation, but they certainly suggest the probability that the term peel was coming in the 15th and 16th centuries to be used in a less severely technical sense than formerly.

IV.—PEELS OF THE 16TH CENTURY.

I have met with few or no historical instances of peels in the 15th century.⁶ To all appearance the peel system of the Borders, originating in the harrassing warfare and feuds and the unceasing spoliations of the march territory, was not in full operation until the 16th century. A clue to the gradually changing meaning of the word, and at the same time an explanation of the prevalence of peels on the Border, is afforded by an Act of the Scottish Legislature in 1535. It must be examined with the microscopic eye.

'FOR BIGGING OF STRENTIS ON THE BORDOURIS.

Item,⁷ It is statut and ordanit for saiffing of men thare gudis and gere upoun the bordoris in tyme of were and all uther trublous tyme, That every andit man duelland in the Inland or upon the bordouris havand thare ane hundreth pund land of new extent sall big ane sufficient barmkyn apoun his heretage and landis in place maist convenient of stane and lyme contenand

¹ Bower, ii. 321.

² Boece, 319 *verso*. Bellenden, ii. 430.

³ Wyntoun, viii. 4709.

⁴ Fordun, i. 362. Bower, ii. 323, 324.

⁵ Wyntoun, viii. 5009.

⁶ *Acta Dominorum*, p. 54, has 'The Peile' as a place name.

⁷ *Scots Acts* (Thomson), ii. 346.

thre score futis of the square¹ ane eln thick and vj. elnys heicht for the ressett and defens of him his tennentis and ther gudis in trubulous tyme wt ane toure in the samin for him self gif he thinkis it expedient: And that all uther landit men of smallar rent and renew big pelis and gret strenthis as thai ples for saifing of thare selfis men tennentis and gudis: And that all the saidis strenthis barmkynnis and pelis be biggit and completit within twa yeris under the pane.’²

There is in this enactment a marked contrast between a barmkin ‘of stane and lyme’ on the one hand, and a peel on the other, but the difference between them does not extend to the purpose, which in both cases was ‘the saifing of men thare gudis and gere upoun the bordoris.’ The difference was a question of expense turning upon the material used in the construction. The barmkin was of stone and lime; the inference is irresistible that ordinarily the peel was not so. The purpose of peel and barmkin alike was to serve as a place of refuge in time of trouble not only for the men, women, and children, but also for their goods and cattle. These minor strengths were indispensable in that wild marauding time. Buchanan³ appears to refer to the peels under the Latin term *propugnacula* when he mentions alongside of the castles (*arces*) of the higher classes these *propugnacula* of the lower orders, who, he says, have them as a provision against sudden incursions and are in the habit of protecting themselves and their possessions in them.

There is a sad penury of witnesses to the character of these peels, or as English writers usually called them, ‘piles.’ The endless allusions to their downfall give us no clear statement as to what they were. There are extant in our historical literature only two or three passages which in any way tend to explain away the difficulty of the Act of 1535—the question, namely, what the peels were made of, if they were not of stone and lime. John Lesley,

¹ That is, the barmkin was to be square, each side to measure 60 feet, and the walls to be 3 feet thick and 18 feet high.

² The penalty is not stated; as if the statute had never been verbally completed.

³ Buchanan, xiv. chap. 17, *sub anno* 1522, ‘*Utriusque provincie arces cum maximo potentiorum nec leviori plebis (que adversus subitas incursiones huc habebant propugnacula in quibus se suaque servare soliti erant) damno.*’ It seems from this passage that Buchanan considered a *propugnaculum* as falling under the generic term *arx*.

Bishop of Ross, took the trouble to frame a definition. Had he done so in six lines instead of three, perhaps the present inquiry would have been rendered unnecessary. We must be content with what Lesley has left us, remembering that he flourished in the palmy day of the peel, that he knew his nation's history and was no recluse, and that his words merit minute attention.

Bishop Lesley, whom I shall quote in a 16th century translation, devoted a chapter to the manners and customs of the Borderers. From that chapter the following passage is taken,¹ of which the original Latin is appended below.² It refers to the rank and file of the reiving borderers, not to the aristocracy among them.

'Thair castelis and palices are scheiphouses and luges³ of quhais burning thay are nocht sair solist. Bot they far starker do make fournuiked of earth only quhilk nather can be burnte nor without a great force of men of weir down can be castne or without sum travel with the sueit of their browis; thir ar thair pailles.'

Father Dalrymple's translation is rather free, and perhaps it is better to translate the two sentences afresh thus:—'Their buildings are mere huts or shielings, the burning of which little disturbs them. The more powerful⁴ build for themselves 'pyramidal towers,' which they call *pailles*, made of earth only, which cannot be burnt, and can only be thrown down by a large force of soldiery and much labour.'

There is a serious difficulty here. How can a tower, four-cornered or otherwise, be made of earth only? Sir Walter Scott⁵ cut the knot by heroically translating *ex sola terra* as 'made entirely of stone.' But this is not

¹ Scottish Text Society's edition of Lesley's *Historie of Scotland*, translated by Father James Dalrymple in 1596, vol. i. p. 98.

² *Ædificia sunt case tuguria de quorum incendiis nihil sunt solliciti. Potentiores [sibi] pyramidales turres, quas pailles vocant, ex sola terra, que nec incendi nec nisi magna militum vi ac sudore deici possunt, sibi construunt.*—Lesley, *De Origine etc. Scotorum*, edition of 1675, pp. 57-8. The '*sili*' where it first occurs appears redundant and erroneous.

³ I here omit 'quhilkis thai commonlie cal pailles,' these words being obviously misplaced.

⁴ Meaning by this probably the head-men of clans.

⁵ *Provincial Antiquities*, App. 2 to Essay on Border Antiquities.

translation. *Ex sola terra* will not bear that sense.¹ Can it mean that the 'pailles' (which, by the way, Lesley in his vernacular writings² spelt 'peillis') were, as some contend, mere earth mounds, and that when English marauders 'clam the peel' at Jamie Telfer's of the fair Dodhead,³ they were only scaling an artificial hillock? This solution is much worse than Sir Walter's, for surely no earthen mound could have been described as a pyramidal or four-cornered tower. Is there any solution? Or is it necessary to suppose that Lesley wrote nonsense? I think there are two alternative solutions.

Let us remember that the latest peel, with the details of the actual making of which we are acquainted, was at Stirling in 1336; that that peel was essentially a structure of clay; that the rampart of Perth made in the same year was described as a thick wall of clay; that clay-daubing was a mode of building dwelling-houses in the south of Scotland during the present century; and that often in 16th century allusions the mention of 'peels and stone-houses' plainly implies that a peel was something other than a stone-house. If it was a 'clay daubing,' there would be an end to the difficulty in understanding Lesley's averment that it was made of earth only and was incombustible. There are attractions in the hypothesis, but it must be owned that no historical Border peels on record can be demonstrated to have been of that construction. The fact is not conclusive, but in the absence of actual instances no great stress can be laid upon the clay-daubing hypothesis, standing as it does so perilously without proved contemporary example.

The other alternative solution of the combined puzzle of Lesley's definition and the Act of 1535 necessitates a survey and examination of the almost innumerable references to the peel, not only in the 16th century histories, but also in the contemporary state papers, which are, as evidence, far superior

¹ I can adduce 16th century authority for this sufficiently clear fact that 'of earth only' does not mean 'of stone.' In August 1542 two 'bulwarkes of erthe' were ordered to be made at Holy Island, and in September reply was made that 'the two bulwark of erth' are to be gone on with, albeit report had been made 'that there is stone plentie and sufficient . . . to make the bulwark . . . all of stone.'—*Hamilton Papers*, i. 154. 179.

² Bannatyne Club's edition of Lesley, pp. 126, 148.

³ Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*.

to the histories. The testimony from these varied quarters is far from distinct. Notwithstanding, it is possible to collate from it an intelligible reading of the word 'peel.'

1. It is proper at the outset to look again at the Act of 1535, to note that the barmkin, 60 feet square and $18\frac{1}{2}$ feet in height, 'for the saiffing of men, thare gudis and gere,' is of stone and lime. It is put in marked contrast with the peel, of which neither materials nor dimensions are given, but which also was for the protection of men and goods in time of trouble. This much is certain, therefore, that theoretically they served the self-same function.

2. In the case of the barmkin the proof of the function actually being served is abundantly clear. At the siege of Wark Castle in 1523 the outer ward was taken. It was, says Hall,¹ 'the uttermoste warde called the Barnkyns, where the beastes and barnes were.' It was the interval between the outer wall and the inner one, forming, as Buchanan (who was a volunteer in the expedition) describes it, a broad space,² in which in war-time the country people used to seek refuge, and to bring with them their cattle and crops.³ The goods and gear, the cattle and corn, were put in the barmkin.⁴ The tower, or stone house, within the barmkin was reserved for the borderers themselves. Often the barmkin was captured although the tower withstood attack. In one case in 1544 the Englishmen 'wonn the Barmkyn and gatt many Naggs and Nolt, and smoked very sore the Towre.'⁵ In most cases where the barmkin is men-

¹ Hall (reprint 1809), 666.

² *Eam* [i.e. the tower of the castle] *duplex murus ambit, exterior latum amplexus spatium in quod belli tempore rustici solebant confugere ac pecora fructusque agrorum conferre.* Buchanan's Hist. xiv. 22.

³ So frequent is the mention of the burning of corn in these barmkins, or barnkins, that the latter spelling (barnkin) might reasonably be explained as due to a mistaken popular etymology. Note Hall's reference to 'beastes and barnes,' fully borne out by Buchanan's '*horrea atque stramenta que in eis erant.*' xiv. 22. Compare Bruce Armstrong's *Liddesdale*, appx. p. lxi. *Hamilton Papers*, i. lxix.

⁴ The same arrangement as at Wark is found at Norham in 1542. There were in the outer ward towers, that 'the contre repaying thyder wyth their goodes maie lye for their safigarde.' *Hamilton Papers*, i. 288.

⁵ Haynes' *State Papers*, p. 46. A similar case, p. 45. Another in Bruce Armstrong's *Liddesdale*, appx., p. lxiii.

tioned it is not as an independent erection (although obviously it might be so from the terms¹ of the Act of 1535), but as the outwork of a tower or stone house. Thus we hear² of 'towers of stone with all their barnekyns or bulwarkes,' 'Towres and Barmekyn,'³ or 'Barmkeyn at the Towre.'⁴ We have extant certain correspondence⁵ about 'scowrying of the dich and making of a barmekyn' about the castle of Bewcastle in 1541, and we know from the correspondence that this barmkin, which was both long and high, was 'four square.'

Summing up these facts we find that usually the barmkin was an outer wall or moated rampart round a house or tower, enclosing a space in which the cattle and corn of the borderers were stored. The term barmkin was sometimes applied to the whole.⁶

3. In the case of peel⁷ there are many contrasts which enforce the belief that a true peel in the middle of the 16th century was certainly not a stone house or stone tower. There are evidences⁸ that a peel was combustible from the inside. This would be inevitable if, as is to be supposed, there was a

¹ The phrase 'necessary fortresses barnekyns and houses' implies the same. State Papers Henry VIII, v. 193.

² Holinshed (reprint 1808), iii. 680. Hall, 645.

³ Haynes' *State Papers*, 54.

⁴ Haynes' *State Papers*, 45.

⁵ *Hamilton Papers*, i. 124.

⁶ The 'hous of Aiton with the barmekyne,' *Hamilton Papers*, i. xcix, is elsewhere named 'Aiton barmkyn.' *Hamilton Papers*, i. xci.

⁷ 'Castels piles townes and villages,' Holinshed, iv. 238. 'Castell piles stone-houses townes and villages,' Holinshed, iv. 339. 'Castell pile or house,' Holinshed, iv. 340. 'Sondrye stone-houses and lytell piles,' State Papers Henry VIII, v. 521. 'Sondry piles and stone-houses,' Ditto, v. 523. 'Sondry piles and strong towers,' Ditto, v. 527. 'Keist down sindrie peillis,' Bannatyne Club, Lesley's Hist., p. 126. 'Downcasting of peillis,' Ditto, 148. 'Kest down sindrie stane houses and strenthis,' Ditto, 189. 'All the Peillis Houses corn,' Haynes' *State Papers*, 46. 'Castells Toures and Piles' [This is the heading of an official and obviously careful and exact paper], Ditto, 54. 'Strong piles,' 'Every pile fortresse and village,' Hall, 807, 861. 'Where piles he pulled down apace,' Battle of Flodden, verse 144. 'Furth of the said place of the Peill of Levingstoun,' Reg. Priv. Council Scot., v. 193. 'Cum mansione lie peillhouse,' Retours Selkirk (1695), No. 107. 'Castell towne pile ne village,' Fabyan (reprint, 1811), 706.

⁸ 'Sett fyre in a peyll.' *Hamilton Papers*, i. lxxviii.

series of office-houses within it. It is certain that it furnished accommodation for cattle and crops. In 1544 when¹ Englishmen 'wonn a pyle' they 'brought away 200 nolt.' In 1586 we hear² of 'ane peill house with byre hall and berne.' In 1579 a complaint³ was made 'for pulling doun of a peill' when the offenders 'sta and away tuke xl ky and oxin, ane meir and ane foill.' In 1567 a summons was issued⁴ to the 'haldaris keparis and detenaris of the hous and peill of Westhousis to rander and deliver the samyn with the volt and barmkin thair of'—a demand suspiciously redundant in its terminology, containing the only example I have ever seen of the mention together of peel and barmkin. If the triplet 'haldaris keparis and detenaris' was necessary for the due description of the occupants, there need be no difficulty in believing that the doublet 'peill' and 'barmkin' was necessary to describe the fortification which they held.

I believe the difference between holders, keepers, and retainers was, in the conception of the scribe, about as great as that between peel and barmkin. In fact the two terms are sometimes employed for the same thing. Thus in 1542 one place near Berwick⁵ is variously referred to as a 'pyle,' as the 'pile of Ayton,' as a 'hous and barmekyne,' and the 'hous of Aiton with the barmekine,' and as 'Aton barmkyn.'

Like the barmkin, a peel might have within it a tower of stone,⁶ but so far

¹ Haynes' *State Papers*, p. 47.

² Reg. Priv. Council, Scotland, iv. 106.

³ Ditto, iii. 236. The next editor of Scott's *Border Minstrelsy* may see in this an illustration for the ballad of Jamie Telfer, see *supra*, p. 23.

⁴ Reg. Privy Council, Scotland, i. 593.

⁵ *Hamilton Papers*, lxix. xcix. xci.

⁶ This was the case with 'the pele cauld Caw Mylles' in 1532. (*State Papers*, Henry VIII. iv., 630, 635, 639.) This might possibly be an early example of the transfer of the name of peel to the stone tower itself. Leland in 1539 wrote of a 'prety pyle' built from 'the stones of the Pict Wall' (Bruce's *Handbook to Roman Wall*, 1885, p. 235). Even in the 15th century a metrical romancer speaks of a 'pylle of ston,' obviously meaning a castle (Torrent of Portingal, l. 575.) Earlier still Chaucer also in *House of Fame*, iii. 220, had used 'pell' in the same sense. In 1483 the *Catholicon Anglicanum*, instead of expressly defining 'a peille,' makes a cross reference for its meaning to 'a castelle.'

as records go this does not seem to have been usual. The peel was, like the barmkin, a place of defence and shelter. The peel of Ayton, already alluded to, was defended by eighty men, and apparently had within it horses, cattle, sheep, and other goods. In 1542 two Englishmen 'sett fyer in a peyll' on Corrie Water in Annandale, and took away¹ with them 30 oxen and cows, 8 horses, 60 sheep, 'with mych other insight of howsholde.'

Generalisations and definitions are necessary although dangerous, and the present case constrains some attempt in that direction. The functions of peel and barmkin² are so much alike, and the references to them so similar, that an inference from the Act of 1535 appears to offer the only real solution of the problem. Whilst a barmkin was a close formed by a wall of stone and lime, a peel seems to have been a close, probably rectangular, formed by a stockade or wooden wall, sometimes earthen faced. The barmkin was usually the adjunct of a tower or strong house within; the peel was perhaps oftenest a self-dependent structure, at once house and outer wall. This solution can be substantiated by historical examples, which are at the same time quite reconcilable with Lesley's peculiar description of the 'pailles.' Thus there is mentioned in the border correspondence³ of Henry VIII. 'a strong pele of Ill Will Armistranges builded aftur sicke maner that it couth not be brynt ne destroyed unto it was cut downe with axes.' Why it could not be burnt may be guessed from a description⁴ given in 1541 of the houses of the 'heddesmen' of Tyndale,⁴ which were said to be 'very stronge houses, whereof for the most part the utter sydes or walls be made of greatt sware⁶ oke trees, strongly bounde and joyned together with greatt tenours⁷ of the same so thycke mortressed⁸ that yt wilbe very hard without great force and lasure to breake

¹ *Hamilton Papers*, i. lxviii.; compare Haynes' *State Papers*, 47.

² Even the burning is said to occur in both cases. They 'brent...Ayton barmkyn.' (*Hamilton Papers*, i. xci.)

³ *State Papers, Henry VIII.* iv. 492; see also Bruce Armstrong's *Liddesdale*, i. 77.

⁴ These 'heddesmen,' or heads of clans, are no doubt the '*potentiores*' of Lesley's passage, p. 22, *supra*.

⁵ Quoted from the MS. by Mr. Bruce Armstrong in his *Liddesdale*, i. 76.

⁶ Square.

⁷ Tenons.

⁸ Mortised.

or caste downe any of the said houses, the tymbers as well of the said walles as roofes be so great and covered moste part with turves and earth that they wyll not easily burne or be set on fyre.'

This last passage, which we owe to the diligence of Mr. Bruce Armstrong, historian of Liddesdale,¹ may be compared with the letter² by the Earl of Hertford to Henry VIII. in April, 1544, relative to the fortification of Inchkeith. It had been believed by the Scots that the English ships 'hade tymbar in them redi framed to mak a bouldwark upon Inchkith and would covar the vauls ther of with turves,' and Hertford wrote to the King for instructions. This system of turving wooden ramparts appears to be the explanation of Lesley's puzzle, and to throw a flood of light on the whole question. Houses thus strengthened cannot have been by any means uncommon if one may judge from a casual reference to 'certayne turved houses' in a border despatch³ dated 23rd November, 1542, in which the immediately preceding sentence mentions a 'strengthe of wood.'

The adjection of earth to a stockaded fort or house is a device still resorted to in warfare. Indeed, the term 'block-house' probably applied to such structures appears in an English statute of 1512 in a very suggestive conjunction.⁴ 'Nother pile blokhous ne bulwork is made.' It is not a little surprising to find that a modern blockhouse comes so near the description of the Tyndale turved houses in the 16th century border papers. It is⁵ a covered building usually rectangular⁶ in shape, the walls being formed of stockade work of squared logs and the roof of beams and planks 'with a covering of earth.' Outside the building a ditch is excavated and the earth is

¹ May the issue of his second volume be hastened!

² *Hamilton Papers*, ii. 330. Compare *Diurnal of Occurrents*, p. 45, where an account of the fort at Broughty in 1547 says the English 'biggit certane timber graith thair, and maid thair ane strength.' Compare the name, Strength of Liddell, p. 14 *supra*.

³ *Hamilton Papers*, i. lxxx.

⁴ *New Eng. Dict.*, *voce* blockhouse.

⁵ Phillips' *Field and Permanent Fortification*, 1874, p. 67.

⁶ This does not seem to have been the shape of the old blockhouses if we may judge from Pitscottie's description of the wooden palace made in Athole for James V., which had 'in everie quarter ane round lyk ane blokhous.'—Pitscottie (1814), p. 344.

'thrown up against the walls.' The outward view of such a structure¹ would harmonise generally with Lesley's account and would assuredly render most intelligible his statement that a peel was made of earth only. It would not be seriously misdescribed as a pyramidal tower,² because the slope of earth would necessitate a marked 'batter' of the outer faces. It would be incombustible except from the inside—if even combustible then. It is, however, to be supposed that only the smaller structures of this kind would admit of being roofed over in one piece as those in Tynedale apparently were. Into speculation on such details it is useless to enter, for there are no facts to work on. Roofed or not, a high rectangular stockaded rampart, composed of beams, strongly mortised into each other and covered as far as possible with earth would not only answer the ends required, but would fulfil the conditions of the act of 1535 as being a less costly structure than a heavy barmkin of stone. It brings the peel of the sixteenth century into line with a known type of structure then prevalent, and proved to have been in use for the same purpose two centuries before. It also realises with sufficient closeness the description given of a 'peel' by the sole contemporary historian who has somewhat vaguely told us what it was. In short, it suits the facts of history.

V. GENERAL REMARKS.

One point only remains to be noticed, viz., the transition of the conception of 'peel,' as denoting a strength of wood to its now universal acceptance, as *simpliciter* denoting a border tower of stone, irrespective of any correlative or antecedent sense. This is capable in some cases of the simplest explanation by well known laws of language. Things die, but words live. The rude and relatively temporary peel was supplanted by a stone tower set on its site or within it, and the 'peel-tower' or 'peel-house' in course of time³ by insensible

¹ Since this sentence was written I have found a case in 1544 in which what is in one document referred to as 'a pyle or a fortress' is in another called 'a blockhouse.'—*Hamilton Papers*, ii. 714, 366.

² The sections given by Major Philips in his book where cited *supra* show this very well.

³ See, for example, 'peill-house' in Pitscottie (1814), p. 306.

gradations became so thoroughly identified with the 'peel' that it is now difficult to conceive that 'peel' ever meant anything except what it means now—a small tower.¹ Moreover the term is now applied to many towers to which the name was never given in the 16th century. It is in scores upon scores of cases a mere modern misnomer,² of *savant* not traditional origin.

One further remark shall close my attempt to trace an eventful development—the progress of 'peel' starting from a palisade and ending in a stone tower. The original palisade or stockade, first called 'peel' when Edward I. was warring against Scottish independence, was in itself no new thing in this country. It may have had distinctive features marking it off from any previous work of the kind, but generically a moated palisade is a structure belonging to primeval times.³ In Scotland most of the prehistoric forts and camps were probably provided with that defence.⁴ The system was widely prevalent in the 13th century, as we know from two incidents in the annals of Inverness. King William the Lion granted to the burgesses there a charter⁵ which narrates that he agreed to make a fosse about the burgh, and that they agreed to erect a good palisade (*bono palitio*) and to maintain it. Many years later, in 1228, a marauder having burnt certain wooden forts (*quasdam munitiones ligneas*) in Moray, burnt also a great part of Inverness,⁶ showing that the fosse

¹ I confess I cannot say when the word came absolutely to mean a stone tower. Sporadic English examples of 'pile' with that sense come first. Peel had certainly not acquired its completely modern sense before the 17th century. Examples need careful examination. I know cottages near the Solway known as 'The Clay Daubings,' which have been stone buildings so far back as most people's memory goes, although persons still alive remember the original houses of clay.

² The man who tries to gainsay this will perhaps be good enough to show us how many existing so-called peels were known by that name in the 16th century. He will find them few and far between. In Dumfriesshire (not forgetting Sanquhar) I doubt he will find not one example.

³ As to its military service, see Viollet-le-Duc's *Dictionary of Architecture*, voce *palissade*.

⁴ Boadicea in her address to her troops in A.D. 61 reminded them that they had stockades and walls and ditches. See Xiphilin in *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, I. lvii.

⁵ *Scots Acts* (Thomson), i. 88.

⁶ Bower, ii. 57-S.

and palisade had ceased to be sufficient for their purpose, or had been ill guarded.

The most singular thing about the word is the tenacity with which it clung to its primitive meaning as a fort or fortification of wood work. It was a palisade or stockade in the time of Edward I. It was still a stockade in the time of Henry VIII. It did not lose that sense—the old wood was not petrified—until peace and the growth of law and order had ended the long chapter of Border broils and depredations, and the purpose of the thing it signified had become a mere matter of historical curiosity.

VI.—ETYMOLOGY.

Biographers usually begin with the ancestry of their hero, but in this biography of 'peel' the etymological pedigree comes last.

It has been made tolerably plain that from the stone peel as it now stands, we must go back to earlier peels of wood and earth or clay, and from them still further back to peels of wood. Even in the 13th century a wooden peel might be made after the fashion of a tower.

The Romancer it says Richard did mak a pele
On castelle wise, all wais wrouht of tre fulle well.¹

'Pel' in the sense of palisade was in literary use as a military term. Exeter, an Old-English poet tells us,² was in the days of King Arthur made

Defensable vyth wyth bretaxes and pel.

These words, which may be compared with an early Anglo-French romancer's references to the '*bresteches*' and '*palis*' used in fortifying Scarborough,³ would have been no less applicable, as we have seen, at Linlithgow, Perth,

¹ Hearne's *Robert of Brunne*, p. 157.

² *Robert of Brunne* (R. S.), line 15912.

³ *Dunc fuit les granz fosses lever*
Pur ens garir e rescetter
Levent bresteches od kernels
Kē cuntrevalant bons chastels
De herituns et de palis.

—*Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey* (R.S.), ii. 144. The date of the poem cited is about 1240.

and Selkirk. The English poet above cited describes the making of the Roman Wall, saying that the Emperor Severus

Dide¹ make an overthwert dik
Bitwyxte to sees a ful gret strik²
And ther-on a pale³ wel y-poynt
Thykke and hey ful wel y-joynt.

Every early example bears out the statement that in a peel 'all was wrought of tree full well.' The unit of peel and palisade was of course a stake, and it is not surprising that the word peel was contemporaneously used in that sense also, which indeed was its original and native significance. 'Irenschod was ilka peel,' said Robert of Brunne,⁴ touching the planting of sharp stakes in the Thames. In Old French '*pal*' was used for a palisaded enclosure,⁵ just as '*pel*' was for a palisade⁶ or its component stake.⁷

It is evident that the etymology must be traced back along the line of descent indicated by the earliest meaning.⁸ That earliest meaning was un-

¹ Robert of Brunne (R. S.), line 5829.

² Strik, stretch.

³ Compare Lesley's 'pailles.' In the *Gest Hystoriale* (Early Eng. Text Society), line 322, the account of the fortifications of Colchis includes towers 'with proude pals of prise.'

⁴ Robert of Brunne (R.S.), line 4637.

⁵ *Dedans son pal* (= *son enclos*). Littré, voce *pal*.

⁶ La Curne, voce *pal*.

*Mosscreul a bien clos enforchié et fermé
De pel a herichon de mur et fosse.*

Roman de Rou, line 2628.

'*Pel a herichon*' was a palisade topped with spikes, which naturally suggested its name of hedgehog palisade. It is frequently mentioned in the *Roman de Rou*. See *Contemp. Review*, March, 1893, p. 342.

⁷ Brachet's *Etym. French Dictionary*, voce *pieu*, forms of which were *pel* and *piel*. Compare also quotation stating that dower lands were burdened with furnishing '*pel*' to the castle. Littré, voce *pieu*.

⁸ This puts the Celtic 'peel' or 'pill' out of court, for 'mound' and 'castle' are both late and derived meanings. Even the word itself is said to come from the English. See *Century Dict.*, voce *peel*. Obviously an old English word meaning stake could not come from a Celtic word meaning mound or castle.

doubtedly 'a stake,' and I have, therefore, with great deference to the distinguished etymologists who have connected the word with the Latin *pila*, come to a different conclusion. I believe that 'peel' came to us through the French 'pel,' which was the lineal representative¹ of the Latin *palus*, a stake—a derivation, in support of which history and philology offer most distinct and mutually corroborative testimony.²

¹ Brachet's *Etym. Fr. Dict.*, vocibus *pal* and *pieu*. I express no opinion on the question whether 'pile' may not have an independent descent from *pila*.

² On 5th August last, after receipt of a copy of the first issue of this paper, Professor Skeat was good enough to write to me, "Beyond all controversy you are right. I recanted my old opinion some time ago." See p. 2 *supra*. Bishop Creighton also, on 25th August, kindly wrote, "I think you have gone far to make out your case." See p. 1 *supra*.

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